We spoke with women leaders about how their work helps the community. This is how they are...

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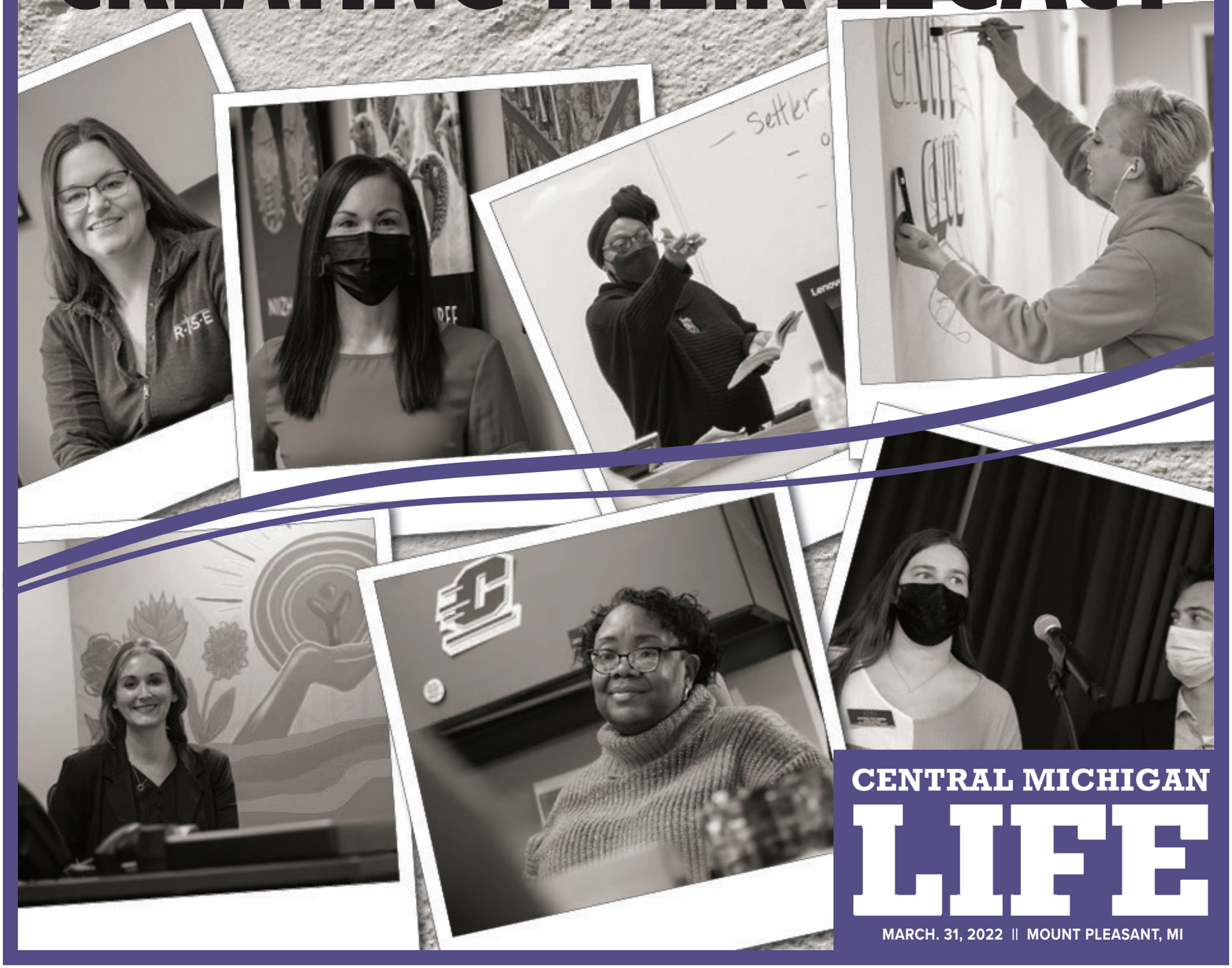

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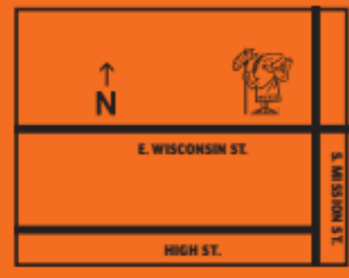

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PHOTO HIGHLIGHT

Ashley Morse | Staff Photographer
Students and supporting community members marched in support for Ukraine from the Student Activity Center to the Korean War memorial in downtown Mount Pleasant March 26.

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WOMEN LEADERS WHO ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

For Women's History Month, Central Michigan Life spoke to seven women leading different organizations. We asked them what inspires them to help make positive strides in the community and what legacy they want to leave behind.

Jennifer Page

R.I.S.E Advocacy Inc.

Jennifer Page spearheads an organization that has empowered women since its founding.

RISE Advocacy provides free support services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. For the last four years, Page has led the operation of those services.

Securing grants and running human resources is only part of the job. Page ensures the group's operations are running smoothly. She said she's usually doing something new every day.

Page graduated from Central Michigan University twice with a bachelor's degree in secondary education and social studies, then a master's degree in public administration.

She wanted to be a high school teacher, but after working within the nonprofit field she "fell in love."

Her background in public administration and education allows her to bring new insight to RISE.

She said the public perception behind what a nonprofit is capable of presents its own set of challenges. She works to ensure that people are aware of what her organization does.

"The viewpoint that people have of people in nonprofits – and maybe especially women in nonprofits – is that we're not strong and that we're not here to run a business. They think we're here just to be nice and sweet, and I don't think that that's always the case," Page said.

Leading RISE has allowed Page to reflect on what she believes makes a good leader. She relies on experts and listening to the community in order to provide the best services. Working alongside these experts in RISE is Page's favorite part of the job.

As she works alongside other women leaders, she said she is happy to be a part of leadership in the community.

"One of the things I love about this community of women leaders is that it's a really supportive environment," Page said. "I hope that more women go into leadership roles moving forward."

Story and photos by Makayla Coffee and Layla Blahnik-Thoune

Katelyn King

Student Government Association

Kate King acts as the link between CMU students and administration in her role as Student Body President.

King joined SGA in 2020 during her sophomore year as a representative for the student environmental alliance.

"Immediately I fell in love with the position (and) getting to work with other students to kind of make changes on our campus," King said.

During her junior year, King took on the role of special projects coordinator where she worked on projects like the tampon initiative. This initiative provides menstrual products in some women's bathrooms across campus.

As president, she works to create and better coordinate student resources like the Student Food Pantry.

She hopes to get the food pantry into a more accessible space before she graduates. She has already been able to secure a new fridge and a vehicle for the group.

"My favorite part (about my role) is just getting to advocate for students and create change," King said. "Our food pantry coordinators came to me at the beginning of the year letting me know that they were struggling with a lot of different things. I was really able to work with them and with the administration to get that immediate change for the food pantry. We were able to give them resources that were being overlooked."

King said she wants students to understand that SGA is a place students can feel confident using to voice their opinions.

"(I want to ensure) students are getting the chance to fight for what we need (and) that SGA is in the place to continue to advocate for change," she said.

Megan Bair

For Art's Sake, downtown Mount Pleasant

Megan Bair, co-owner of For Art's Sake, is one of the newer women business owners in the area. She focuses her efforts on supporting local artists by not only selling their work but also teaching and creating her own art.

Bair opened the business with co-owner, Hannah France Mikus, in 2020.

As of March 29, Bair provides a space for about 54 different artists to get their work out in front of the community to be seen and sold.

"I love being able to share my love for art with other people," Bair said. "A lot of people just don't have the opportunity to have art in their lives... I just love finding new ways to share the craft with other people."

With years of community involvement, Bair said opening For Art's Sake might have been easier for her than others. However, she still faces challenges as an artist and business owner.

"I think sometimes in business it takes a lot more to get people to take you seriously as a woman (and), especially as an artist," Bair said. "But I have a mission and we're going to make this happen. I'll figure out how to do it myself and all of the people that join and help and support are amazing bonuses."

"I think you have to be strong and independent and plan to work your ass off and hope that people join in."

Before starting a business, Bair said it's important for business owners to understand the mountain of work before them. She recommends seeking advice from existing businesses and getting used to doing behind-the-scenes tasks.

Regardless of her work with For Art's Sake, Bair said she wants to leave a legacy as someone who encouraged growth and change.

Annie Sanders

United Way of Gratiot & Isabella Counties

United Way is an international network of over 1,800 local nonprofit fundraising affiliates but Annie Sanders, president and CEO at United Way of Gratiot & Isabella Counties, has spent the last three and a half years helping her neighbors.

United Way aims to create community-based and community-led solutions to fight for the health, education and financial stability of each individual within the community.

Sanders grew up in Mount Pleasant and attended Central Michigan University where she majored in commercial recreation.

She worked with Special Olympics Michigan while pursuing her master's degree and served as CMU's assistant and associate director of Alumni Relations.

Now, she splits her time between both her Mount Pleasant office and her Alma office trying to create changes in both communities.

While advocating for those who need help, Sanders is also working to raise funds locally to invest in United Way's nonprofit partners.

Last year the group was able to financially contribute to about 50 nonprofits within the community.

Sanders notes the strong female presence within her team at United Way, but also in nonprofit leadership around the world

"All of my positions prior to this I've had strong women leaders as my supervisors and bosses in my department. So, I think I've always felt there was a place for me in those roles," Sanders said. "Now having interns from CMU and having younger women that work within our organization I just think that we're making big moves for sure."

However, she often thinks about her daughters and the challenges they still have yet to overcome such as pay differences.

"I never want my daughters or any female to ever think that they're not equally as capable of doing something as well as a man would be in the exact same position," Sanders said "My girls are raised strong and they know that they can do anything that they want to do."

Maureen Eke

Central Michigan University faculty member and Mount Pleasant City Commissioner

Central Michigan University faculty member Maureen Eke prides herself on being an advocate for both CMU students and Mount Pleasant community members.

Eke has been a faculty member since 1995. She teaches courses on issues that deal with social justice and human rights. Her identity compels her to speak out and educate herself and others. She was born in Nigeria.

"I do believe that I struggle in a number of spaces," Eke said. "I'm a woman, a person of color, I am faculty but also I was not born in this country. So all these different spaces, I navigate them back and forth."

Eke has lived in Mount Pleasant for over 20 years and was recently elected for Mount Pleasant's City Commission in 2021. She said her efforts for the community and for CMU overlap.

"I don't have a choice but to address (certain issues) because I don't see voices addressing them or people addressing them," she said.

Eke is also a part of the Isabella County Human Rights Committee, which she chaired for almost seven years.

It's through all these involvements, Eke hopes to be a voice for multiple underrepresented groups.

She believes that involvement is the best way for someone to lead a group.

"I think if you want to be a good leader, or a strong leader, you really have to model the things that you believe in," Eke said. "I can't teach courses and talk about these issues in the classroom, and then walk out of the classroom and not pay attention to them. That's not me."

Nikita Murry

Director of Diversity Education at Central Michigan University

Director of Diversity Education Nikita Murry has spent the past two years working to create institutional change within CMU.

Murry works with faculty and staff to ensure the university is constantly educating itself.

"Every day, I'm developing something related to education and education on campus," Murry said. "Our work is on changing the campus, changing the culture, changing the policies and procedures so that (individuals)... have the positive experience that they need."

Murry's background is in journalism. She worked as a sports reporter for the Midland Daily News where she was hired to help diversify the paper.

She remembers the "pushback" of being a woman of color in a very male-dominated position.

Regardless, even as a sports reporter, equity and inclusion would always find their way into her stories, Murry said.

Murry worked in counseling for a time and specialized in helping young adults heal from sexual assault. Murry also specialized in understanding trauma as it related to minority groups.

"Even in counseling, I was able to develop a specialization around advocating for people and elevating voices and ensuring that we were equitable in how we conceptualize people and their needs from a mental health and wellness perspective," Murry said.

Murry said securing her current role in diversity education felt like a "straight path." Now she gets to create a pathway for change at CMU.

For Murry, it's important to recognize those who paved the way for her work. She highlighted Ulana Klymyshyn, the former director of the Office of Diversity Education.

"I think it's very important to acknowledge her because she was the one who established the foundation for what diversity education on campus would look like," Murry said. "If I'm following in her footsteps appropriately, I'm adding another strong layer for the next person to build on."

Karmen Fox

Executive Health Director, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Nimkee Memorial Wellness Center

Executive Health Director at Nimkee Memorial Wellness Center, Karmen Fox, oversees seven different departments and around 65 employees.

Nimkee Memorial Wellness Center is the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's (SCIT) health center located on the Isabella Indian Reservation.

Fox is a member of the tribe and prides herself on being active in her community.

"I can sleep at night because I do go above and beyond," Fox said. "If I get a call in the evening or if I get a call on a weekend (then) I will answer those calls, and I will try to find them the resources or the help that they need. My office closes at five, but I don't stop working at five."

She started at Nimkee Medical Clinic filing papers when she was in junior high as a way to participate in the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's summer youth program.

Fox went on to become a medical assistant for Nimkee Medical Clinic while she was training to become a nurse, but later decided not to pursue nursing.

Fox earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from CMU while continuing her work with Nimkee Medical Clinic's public health department. Eventually she landed her current role in 2014.

After this past holiday season, Fox took action to serve her community with COVID-19 testing. Fox and a medical coder at the clinic worked together to test 284 people over two days.

She also volunteers within the community doing things like serving the Girls on the Run Executive Board and volunteering at the Isabella County Restoration House.

As Fox continues to lead the Nimkee Health Clinic, she stresses the importance of confidence and curiosity.

"Women can be leaders. Be confident in what you're doing and if you always want to learn and grow, you can continue to do things," Fox said. "I don't know everything and if I don't then I'm going to try to find the answer. When you think you know everything is when you stop learning and growing."

Alumna discusses winning 'golden ticket' award, public health research

By Zach Kortge
Staff Reporter

Inside Central Michigan University's College of Health Professions is a maze of science labs and lecture halls that have trained generations of health professionals, one of which is Stephanie Baiyasi.

Baiyasi, a veterinarian, movie producer, public health advocate and CMU alumna, has seen her research published in respected journals and the Library of Congress.

Most recently, she became the finalist of a prestegious presidential award.

The Presidential Management Fellowship is an award given to academics to jump start a career in the federal government. Becoming a finalist is highly competitive according to the competition's FAQ page.

Over 8,000 candidates competed for a fast track into highly specialized federal positions.

"I've been told by a number of different people that (being a finalist) is a golden ticket," Baiyasi said. "This opportunity allows you to apply to jobs that are specifically just for presidential management fellowship finalists."

Baiyasi hopes to obtain a fellowship in public health, with an emphasis on the intersection of animal and human health.

One such disease she would like to focus on is Guinea worm, a parasitic infection affecting parts of Africa.

"There's not many diseases that we've completely eliminated," Baiyasi said. "Guinea worm is close to being one that's on the horizon of (being eradicated)."

Guinea worm is a zoonotic disease - one that can be transferred from animals to humans. Studying zoonotic diseases are one of Baiyasi's passions, she said. Before completing her Master of Public Health at CMU in 2020, she did a final project about them.

Interviewing other veterinarians, Baiyasi wanted to find out how clinicians were preventing the transmission of zoonotic diseases.

"As a veterinarian, my interest has always been animal-related, but I have a strong desire to help people out in the long run," Baiyasi said.

Baiyasi has pursued other projects, like videos, to increase her knowledge of public health.

"(Film productions) have been an outlet to try and share," she said. "I feel I'm an educator, but I've been doing it for such a long time, and I feel that there's so much that people should be aware of."

Baiyasi has created several educational films spanning topics like water quality, unions, motor vehicle safety and city violence.

One production is a documentary called "Saginaw Rising". Baiyasi said she acquired skills for the production through volunteering at a local public access channel not far from CMU.

"Hundreds of hours of time spent in Saginaw looking at no-snitch-culture and interactions with police officers and other people holding office," she said.

Baiyasi said the film resulted in increased police funding and an eventual 30 percent decrease in violence in Saginaw. The film was admitted to the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

Baiyasi has traveled across the United States, received high honors and created culturally relevant films. Among all her work, she said she has fond memories of her time at CMU.

"(I want to say) how much I appreciate CMU as an entity," Baiyasi said. "I appreciate the opportunities that they give people, students and other community members."

Courtesy Photo | Stephanie Baiyasi
Stephanie Baiyasi aims to focus her research on Guinea worm, a parasitic infection.

Student with history of drug possession arrested for exposing himself to police

By Gina Hoffbauer
Staff Reporter

A Central Michigan University student is facing multiple charges after he was arrested last week for exposing himself to a university police officer and injuring another.

CMUPD officers Joshua Chapman and Jacqueline Grigg were hosting a student outreach event March 24 in Kulhavi Hall.

Andrew Leyden, 19, entered the room and began calling a Black student the N-word according to the felony complaint provided by the Isabella County Trial Court.

Leyden approached Grigg, making sexual remarks toward her. Leyden attempted to touch Grigg's face and then revealed his genitals to her.

Leyden fought with both Grigg and Chapman before being placed under arrest. Chapman injured his left wrist and required medical attention.

Officers discovered three packages of marijuana, weighing approximately 171 grams in Leyden's backpack. Upon investigating Leydens room with a search warrant, police located eight empty marijuana bags, a black pellet handgun, official documents regarding blotter acid, and a bottle containing a clear liquid police believed to be LSD.

On Feb. 24, CMUPD officers Grigg and Sarah Cuthbertson responded to a fire alarm going off in Carey Hall room 811 at approximately 11:20 p.m.

The officers, along with the hall director, discovered a small amount of marijuana and psilocybin mushrooms on a table in the common room. Officers spoke with the occupants of the room, Leyden and roommate Angelo Green. Officers learned that the mushrooms were purchased from another student named Ryan Cook, 19.

Officers spoke with Cook and his roommate before noticing a pouch of marijuana on a desk. They seized the marijuana and also located a large psilocybin mushroom in a bag and along with a scale located near the mushroom on Cook's desk.

Along with his possesion charge from Feb. 24, Leyden is charged with three felonies including the delivery/manufacturing of marijuana, assault/resisting arrest causing injury and aggravated indecent exposure, which is a two-year high court misdemeanor. Leyden is being held at a $5,000 bond.

Leyden will appear in court April 14.

LIFE IN BRIEF

Doozies Ice Cream Place prepares to open for buisness with brand new flavors

By Paige Hassen
Staff Reporter

Doozies Ice Cream Place, 1310 E Pickard Rd, is set to open for the season at 2 p.m. on Friday, April 1 with weather permitting.

The local ice cream shop found its start in Mount Pleasant in 1985. Owner of Doozies Ice Cream Place, Clyde Dosenberry, is expecting a normal turnout for the start of this season – which he estimates to be about 300 to 400 customers.

Doozie's serves a variety of sweet treats every year, including floats, shakes and both hard and soft-serve ice cream.

Customers can expect new flavors of hard ice cream and arctic swirls that are special to the 2022 season.

Some of these flavors will include a new blackberry hard ice cream and a new arctic swirl flavor that aims to honor one of Mount Pleasant's well-known families, the LaFleurs.

Denny and Kristi LaFleur have been teachers and coaches in the Mount Pleasant community for decades. Both of their sons are coaches in the National Football League.

Matt LaFleur is the head coach of the Green Bay Packers, while Mike LaFleur is the offensive coordinator for the New York Jets.

Doozies Ice Cream Place plans to honor the family by making a new arctic swirl flavor that incorporates the color of both football teams.

The arctic swirl will have green and white for the New York Jets and green and yellow-gold for the Green Bay Packers. Flavors for the colors are not yet finalized.

Dosenberry recommends arctic swirls to new customers. He is excited for the new flavors, as well as being able to see the young people that will be working there again.

"I just enjoy seeing the people and the friendships that you kind of build over the years," Dosenberry said. "I hope people enjoy the ice cream again this year."

Doozies is the only original ice cream shop in Mount Pleasant and is going into its 36th year of business this season.

City takes public comment on marijuana licensing, Broadway summer closure

By Collin Periatt
Staff Reporter

The Mount Pleasant City Commission took public comment on a reciprocity plan for local marijuana dispensaries and voted not to close Broadway Street for pedestrians during the summer months at its March 28 meeting. .

Reciprocity would allow for all five local dispensary retail stores to distribute both medical and recreational marijuana with proper licensing. Mount Pleasant has three dispensaries that offer recreational marijuana - JARS Cannabis and two Lume Cannabis locations.

The medical dispensaries, Consano's and Pure Options, have been advocating for recreational licensing for more than a year.

"Giving us the ability to operate in the adult-use market is the only way for us to survive," Erik Canute, an employee at Pure Options said. "For years we've provided a safe and comfortable environment for residents not only to obtain medical cannabis, but to learn more about the products."

A public hearing on this topic was scheduled for April 11.

Several local business owners spoke out against closing down Broadway Street for pedestrians and outdoor seating during the summer.

The idea started in 2020 as a way to respond to social distancing measures for the pandemic.

Rich Swindelhurst, owner of Midori Sushi and Martini Lounge, voiced opposition to the street closure.

"For necessity, this was a rushed together idea when COVID struck to be able to promote the restaurants and we definitely appreciated any attempts that could be done," Swindelhurst said. "We now have had it closed for two summers and by midsummer last year there was a lot of frustration."

While business owners voiced concern, Christina Sheller, a Mount Pleasant citizen, highlighted how much she enjoyed the space to walk around and eat outside.

"I ended up going downtown way more than I ever did in the past these last two summers," she said.

Regardless, the motion to approve the Broadway Street closure ended up failing 4-2.

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THE BOYS

Chippewa baseball returns to Theunissen Stad

Christian Booher
Sports Editor

At long last, Central Michigan's baseball team has returned home.

After playing its first 20 games of the season on the road, the Chippewas (10-10, 5-1) are set to play their first series of the season at Thenuissen Stadium. The four-game set with the Ohio Bobcats (11-8, 5-3) begins at 3 p.m. Friday.

Led by fourth-year head coach Jordan Bischel, the Chippewas boast plenty to be excited about. Coming off a second consecutive NCAA Tournament berth, the team was selected to win the Mid-American Conference in the preseason poll.

Under Bischel, the Chippewas have won MAC regular season titles in both full seasons in which he's been at the helm. In 2020, the season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CMU has played to a .500 record against top competition in the nonconference slate. This includes a recently concluded three-game series at Iowa, who was picked third in the Big 10's preseason poll. The Chippewas won one game of the slate and suffered close losses in the other two.

Now, the Chippewas are returning home to play in front of the home crowd for the first time this season defending MAC champions have plenty for fans about, including a number of returning contrib year's team that reached the South Bend Regio

Bischel has an excellent pitching staff, led b Midland senior Jordan Patty and Caledonia so Andrew Taylor. The latter is coming off an exc against the Hawkeyes, in which he struck out hitless innings. On the season, Taylor (2-2) ha 38 batters in 30 innings pitched.

Taylor is coming off one of the best seasons history, in which he was named All-America a in addition to being the MAC's Freshman of th Pitcher of the Year. In 2021, he set the progra strikeouts in a single season with 125.

Patty, meanwhile, has rebounded from a slug the season. In his start against conference foe M hurled eight scoreless innings while striking out of the staff will look to continue his roll against t

The pitching staff lost starter Cam Brown to and reliever Ian Leatherman to the MLB Draf experienced pieces remain intact.

Mount Pleasant senior Logan Buczkowski a Heights junior Garrett Navarra complete the t four-man starting rotation. Both have enjoyed solid starts to the campaign. Orland Park, Illinois junior lefty Ryan Palmblad has been the team's best bullpen arm, pitching 12 consecu-

ARE BACK IN TOWN

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tive scoreless innings to start the year.

For the team's pitching strengths, the offense can be equally as good. The top of the team's order is comprised of Sterling Heights senior Mario Camilletti and Allen Park sophomore Jakob Marsee, with both holding batting averages over .300.

Marsee leads the team with three home runs, while Groveport, Ohio redshirt freshman Robby Morgan IV has hit two. After setting the program record in walks last season with 61, Camilletti has already drawn 26 and leads the team with a .522 on-base percentage.

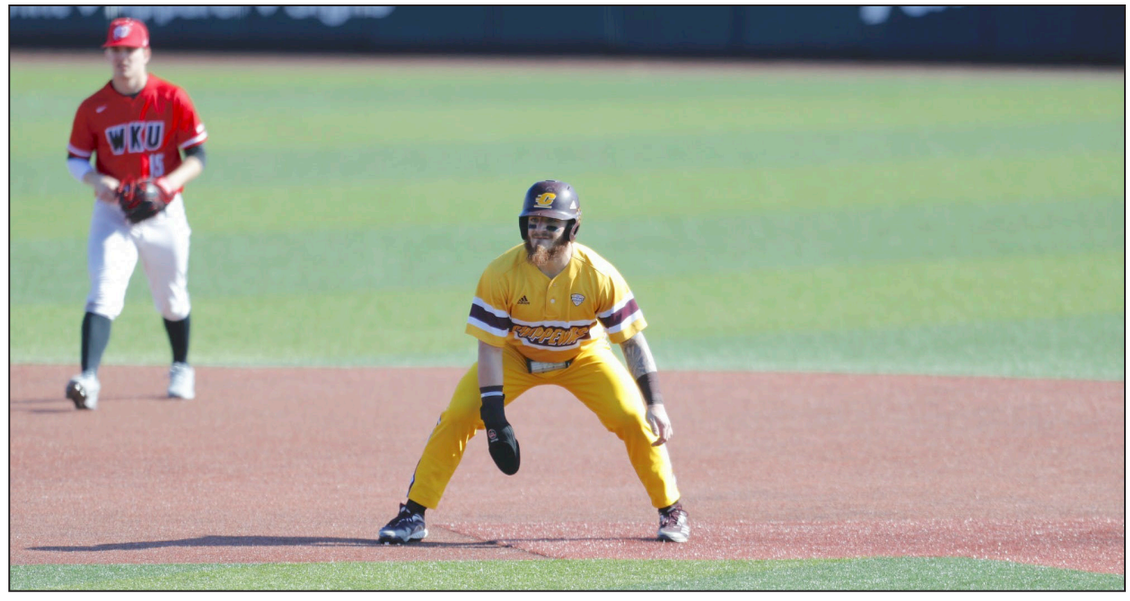
For all the returning strength, the Chippewas have plenty of youth offering optimism about the program's future. Morgan, Plainfield, Illinois sophomore Danny Wuestenfeld and Joliet, Illinois Jacob Donahue are youngsters who were little-used in 2021, but each has seen increased roles in 2022. Wuestenfeld currently leads the team in doubles (7), while manning first base every game.

On the pitching side, true freshmen Adam Mrakitsch and Michael Conte have stepped up in bullpen roles. Conte has allowed just one earned run, while Mrakitsch picked up his first career win against North Carolina A&T on March 8.

As a team, CMU currently sits in second place in the MAC behind Ball State (14-8, 9-1). The Chippewas swept their most recent series against Miami (Ohio), and split their first with Kent State in a weekend that saw two games canceled due to weather.

Ohio, meanwhile, sits in third place behind the Chippewas due to winning percentage. The Bobcats are coming off a split series with Bowling Green. Edward Kutt IV leads Ohio's pitching staff, striking out 36 in 33 2/3 innings pitched, while Collin Kasperbauer holds a .403 batting average to pace the offense. Kasperbauer is one of four Bobcat hitters with an average above .300. AJ Rausch leads the team with four home runs.

The Chippewas will play four games from April 1-3, starting with Friday's home opener. A doubleheader is scheduled for Saturday, beginning at noon, and the series concludes with one game at 1 p.m. Sunday.



Courtesy Photo | CMU Athletics

CMU second baseman Mario Camilletti.

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OPINION |

Who could replace wide receivers Pimpleton, Sullivan?

Christian Booher
Sports editor

Coming off a 9-4 campaign that finished with five straight wins, expectations are as high as ever for Jim McElwain and Central Michigan football.

The high expectations bring big questions, however. After the offense produced its best season in recent years, McElwain and company will have to reload with two top options off to the professional ranks.

In JaCorey Sullivan and Kalil Pimpleton, CMU is losing a combined 1,647 receiving yards from the 2021 season. The former was a big-bodied, one-on-one menace who made big plays in the clutch, while the latter was a speed demon who was a threat to score each time he touched the ball.

So, how do the Chippewas go about filling the immense vacancy that their departures create?

For starters, Dallas Dixon returns for his second full season. The senior from Phoenix, Arizona was second on the team in both receiving yards (701) and touchdowns (8). With another full year, he's poised to become the top option for incumbent Miami, Florida sophomore quarterback Daniel Richardson.

Aside from Dixon, however, there are several options that raised eyes in fall camp but were limited contributors during the season.

Finn Hogan, a 6-foot-4 freshman from Maple City, was slated to be a backup to Sullivan leading up to the season. The 2021 recruit impressed during fall camp, carving out a role right away.

"(Hogan has) been everything above the line," said wide receivers coach Alvin Slaughter during 2021 fall camp. "From just his talent level, his work ethic, everything he's been able to bring to the table has been a plus for us. It's a great addition for us to get this kid."

Hogan played 13 snaps in the season-opening loss to Missouri and suffered a broken collarbone, which sidelined him until the Chippewas' Week 11 meeting with Ball State. He played in three games, preserving his redshirt.

Now, in 2022, Hogan may be one of the go-to guys for the receiving corps.

Goodrich freshman Tyson Davis was in a similar predicament. Like Hogan, Davis was in a backup role (behind Pimpleton) when the season began. Similarly, an injury in the season opener ended his season and prevented the projected growth and development.

McElwain said he'll use the spring to further Davis' rehab with the anticipation of being fully ready to go once the summer starts.

"I'm telling you that this kid's dynamic and a guy that needs to have the ball in his hands," McElwain said of Davis. "So we're excited to get him back. Feel horrible about what happened, because, you know, last year had been a great growing experience for him."

That 2021 recruiting class is ripe with receiver talent, as Saginaw (Heritage) freshman Chris Parker is also a candidate to receive increased action. At 6-foot-2, Parker possesses the necessary size to be a physical threat on the outside.

"As the season wore on, Chris is a guy that actually developed himself," McElwain said. "Once he had a true understanding (of) what we were doing, we felt very comfortable putting him in a game at any time, (but) we wanted to try to preserve his redshirt. Knowing that we had the wealth of receivers, you know, in Remi (Simmons), KP and JaCorey. We didn't want to waste it, you know?. But he was prepared to play if needed.

"I tell you what, (Parker is) smooth. And sometimes you don't think he's running, but everybody else is going way behind. His ability to catch, I really like his hands. And his catch radius, you know, is something that I think will be a positive force."

The Chippewas also boast the return of senior LeVar Gumms, a Northwestern State transfer who played in all 13 games and caught four passes for 32 yards. Sophomore Alec Ward played in six games in 2021, while senior Kenny Brewer III played in 12 and hauled in one pass for six yards.

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March 31st-May 8

CMU Students, CMU Faculty/Staff, and Community Members

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"WE INSPIRE ENGAGEMENT"

Q&A

Matt Werstler

Central Michigan Life sat down with the self-identified superfan to discuss his epic maroon and gold getups and the importance of student game attendance.

Patrick Bouman ■ *Staff Reporter*

Self-proclaimed Central Michigan University athletics "superfan" Matt Werstler said many students do not go to sporting events often enough.

Werstler attends almost every sporting event he can, either decked out in CMU gear or in his uniform for the CMU Marching Band Drumline. When not playing music with the band, Werstler often wears maroon and gold streamers on his head, a CMU flag and a basketball jersey. He got every part of his outfit from the CMU Bookstore and also brings a maroon and gold kick drum with him.

Werstler is a junior from Massillon, Ohio studying geography. He is also in a competitive tennis club.

Why do you dress up at every sporting event?

I sort of got progressively more and more into sports. The drums I bring around actually started much smaller and as a cross country tradition that we had in my high school. The drums got bigger—I have a kick drum now. The dressing up and stuff—that was for basketball. I was only planning on doing it one time, but people liked it so I was like, 'well I guess I'm doing this now.' We've always had like a tiny student section for basketball. I originally dressed up around campus for the full day—telling everyone like, 'tonight's the home opener.' It was more to get the word out that it's basketball season, you can go now and it's gonna be a fun time.

What is something you enjoy about going to every game?

It's definitely a huge stress relief. It's always something to look forward to. When the games are empty, it sort of feels like it's lacking, but at the same time, there's weeks in the winter where it's like three men's basketball games, two women's basketball games and it's just a lot of fun. It's definitely something that's like a break from school work. If I was one of the students who never went to a sporting event, that just seems like it'd be all work, no play. I cannot see myself not going to sporting events at this point.

What's your favorite CMU sport to watch?

That's a tough one. I do love football, but I'm part of the drumline there. As a fan, I'd probably go with basketball, with women's soccer being a close second—that's a sport that definitely gets overlooked on campus. '

Which sport do you think has the best student section?

My freshman year, there was like nobody at the football games—they looked like high school games. This year, the student section did really well at football. Besides that, I'd say baseball showed up really well. We've got a good baseball team and (the stands) are usually half, if not more like completely full. There's been two games I remember that were just completely packed for the baseball team and that's always good to see. I think a lot of it comes down to people wanting to go if a team is winning. The successful sports are really good at pulling in students.

What CMU sports do you think students should watch more often?

Definitely the soccer team. That's sort of more of a compact stadium so it's really easy to interact with other students. Women's lacrosse—it's a much smaller field, but I would say everyone's got to go to at least one sporting event for every team. I mean, who knows? Field hockey is not my favorite sport—I still go to every game—but someone else could go to a field hockey game and absolutely love it. I say try them all.

Why do you think more students should watch CMU sporting events?

(The student section) is usually pretty empty at most of the sporting events. Some people could find it boring, but that's only if you go alone. That's maybe subconsciously why I try to go to every event. If there's a student section, I'm going to be a part of it and we're going to have a good time even if it's just three or four people.

If it was just me and five other people at a basketball game, I'm going to enjoy the basketball game but it won't stick out as opposed to hearing like 50 people chanting. It really makes a difference.

Some people are on their phone for quite a bit of it, but I've never seen anyone leave a game wishing they hadn't gone. You're either going to love it or it's just going to be a one-time experience. Even if it is a one-time experience, you never know what you're missing. If I decided not to go to one game freshmen year, it could have started a pattern and I could just lose all theses memories.

What's your favorite memory from watching CMU sports?

The first one would be last spring when the baseball team hit a three-run home run and the crowd just like let loose. It was like a flipped switch. I think it was against Miami. The second best memory would be soccer against Ohio. That was a very fun one. They had very rowdy visitors and we pulled off the upset—I believe in overtime. We poured out of the stands and made a tunnel for the soccer team and everything. It was great; the experience was like one you wouldn't forget ever. The third one would be this year's Western game. That was the most packed I've seen the student section—probably since I've been here.

Are there any sports you don't go to watch?

I actually have not been to wrestling or gymnastics. There's sports that I go to and then there's sports I consider to be a bit more professional. I have this problem with baseball too—it's a sport where there's a lot of rules and crowds can't interfere as much. The main way I decide when to use the drum is when there is no play happening. If the ball is in play I always keep it quiet. Gymnastics sort of loops so there's not really much time to get into the mentality I have at other sporting events. Wrestling I just didn't have time for—I knew they were really good and every time they have a home meet I want to go there.

The only reason I tend to miss games, is you can't just drop a six page essay to go to a basketball game, no matter how much you want to.

Why should students join CMU sports teams?

We just started tennis last semester. It's been fun so far to go from being a fan to being an athlete. There's a ton of different sports clubs we have. Even if it's not like club tennis or club hockey that travels, we still have the tennis courts open almost at all times. I knew some people who were thinking about joining some club teams, but they didn't. There's no harm in trying. Freshmen year I tried fencing club. I never knew how to fence, and I just showed up. I didn't end up continuing it, but it's all about the experiences you're going to have when you leave CMU.

University-wide assesment survey shows strong disapproval of Davies

Staff Reports

Eight out of 10 respondents to *Central Michigan Life's* Presidential Assessment Survey do not believe university President Bob Davies is a "builder and a good steward" of the institution's financial resources.

A survey that assessed Davies' leadership facilitated by CM Life received results nearly opposite to those collected by the university's Board of Trustees.

After the Presidential Assessment Committee presented its findings at the board's Feb. 17 meeting, *CM Life* released a survey containing the same questions as the university's survey.

CM Life's survey was offered via social media Feb. 23 for anyone with an active cmich.edu email. The goal was to compare the results to those of the university's effort, which was sent to only a fraction of the campus community.

The Board of Trustees Presidential Assessment Committee, consisting of Chair Richard Studley and trustees Isaiah Oliver and Robert Wardrop, was formed to complete the tri-annual review.

The committee crafted a 25-question survey that touches on different aspects of presidential leadership.

According to the Presidential Assessment Committee Report, the original survey was sent to 387 "university stakeholders" in November, including 50 randomly selected students, faculty, staff and alumni, 13 people from the 2018 presidential search committee and, "a group of more than 200 university stakeholders with experience working with the president."

"These individuals were not hand-selected by the board nor the assessment committee; rather, they were chosen based on their membership or participation in groups asked to provide input in the development of the presidential profile used in the 2018 search," Studley wrote in the Presidential Assessment Committee Report. "To ensure we included the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders, this group included students, faculty, staff, alumni, local and state leaders, and community members."

The survey received 193 responses — a response rate of 49.9 percent. At the board's Feb. 17 meeting, Studley presented the committee's findings showing mostly positive reviews for Davies.

Studley called the president's performance "outstanding" and "above-average" before awarding Davies a $35,000 annual raise to his base salary along with a one-time $75,000 bonus. The board cited the salaries of other MAC university presidents and identified that Davies was one of the lowest-paid to justify the move.

The board's decision received criticism from student leaders in the form of a letter to the editor published in CM Life Feb. 21.

Following the release of the results, CM Life took the same questions and created a Microsoft Form survey that anyone with an active cmich.edu email could take.

CM Life followed the survey created by the committee word-for-word and kept the answers in the form of the 1-5 Likert Scale. Those who participated could only take the survey once. Names and emails were kept confidential.

The survey facilitated by CM Life was open until March 18. It received 509 responses.

The results of CM Life's survey were not favorable toward Davies. Nearly every question leaned on the "disagree" side of the Likert Scale whereas the results curated by the Board of Trustees show the highest results to nearly every question being on the "agree" side of the scale.

For example, when CM Life gave anyone with an active CMU email was able to answer the survey question "President Davies is an engaged, inspiring leader with a demonstrated commitment to CMU's heritage, mission, and core values" 64.6 percent of results were strongly disagree or disagree and 81.3 percent of responses from the CMU facilitated survey were strongly agree or agree.

Only Question 23 had the same highest answer on both sets of results.

"President Davies drives for results, setting high goals for personal and group accomplishment; using measurement methods to monitor progress toward goal attainment; tenaciously working to meet or exceed those goals while deriving satisfaction from the process of goal achievement and continuous improvement," Question 23 in the survey reads.

Both surveys received "No Opinion" as the most common answer. In the Board of Trustees assessment, 32.6 said "No Opinion", but the next highest were "Agree" with 28.5 percent and "Strongly Agree" with 24.9 percent. The survey conducted by CM Life, 27.7 percent "No Opinion" while 27.5 percent said "Disagree" and 25.3 percent said "Strongly Disagree."

STI rates cause concern after CMU retires student safe sex organization

By Zach Kortge
Staff Reporter

Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) officials said sexually transmitted infections are on the rise as testing falters in the Isabella County area. Meanwhile, Central Michigan University retired a program aimed at distributing safe sex information and supplies.

"The biggest message that we can get across for Isabella County, and CMU specifically because of that high-risk population based on the age range, is regular testing and screening for HIV and STIs," Health Promotion Supervisor at CMDHD Shelby Pasch said.

With declining levels of testing and prevention education, Pasch said that younger people are testing positive for STIs.

"We are seeing (STI) rates in the younger population, and it is scary," Pasch said.

Pasch said her team had to cancel three of its free HIV and STI testing clinics on campus because no one signed up, while clinics prior to the pandemic had a waiting list of up to 30 people.

Pasch partnered with campus and organization leaders to provide sexual health resources through the Safer Sex Patrol. Last year, the program was retired.

"Because they're students on campus, they're the true boots on the ground for CMU," Pasch said. "So that program not being available is super unfortunate because we no longer have a leg up, we no longer have an in."

Erica Johnson, director of the Volunteer Center, said the program was retired due to a reduction in funding and staffing.

"(The Safer Sex Patrol) was unfortunately just one of the programs we could no longer support, but we are continuing some of the efforts in different and unique ways," she said.

Johnson said CMU still offers safe sex supplies and information on campus.

Free barrier methods and abstinence kits can be found in the Volunteer Center located in Bovee University Center 106. Johnson said the center plans to collaborate with CMDHD to provide educational sessions like the Safer Sex Patrol once offered.

"We are still committed to getting educational experiences on campus for students, providing similar support in different ways," Johnson said.

Pasch said each year, CMDHD offers a presentation about harm reduction and STI and HIV prevention. She said she hopes to destigmatize sexual health and conversations about it.

"It's uncomfortable, but we're going to get vulnerable and we're going to address it," she said.

There is also an ongoing partnership between CMDHD and CMCREW - an organization that operates on campus to support students who are battling addiction.

In addition to partnerships, CMDHD implemented several programs aimed at preventing STIs and HIV.

One program offers safe sex supplies delivered anonymously to community members. Pasch said that the delivery program was implemented during the pandemic and has since been a popular option.

The health department operates a syringe service program where people can receive sterile injection use supplies. The goal of the program is to reduce sharing and reusing of needles to combat the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C.

CMU offers STI testing via the Student Health Services clinic in Foust Hall. The clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Addy Wachter | Staff Photographer
Safer Sex Program kiosk in the Bovee University Center contains safe sex informational materials.

Layla Blahnik-Thoune | Photo Editor

Students play spikeball Sunday, March 20 outside of Thorpe Hall. People all over Mount Pleasant took advantage of the warm weather on the first day of spring.

THE WIN WE NEEDED

New mask policy marks an anticipated return to normalcy

EDITORIAL

So far, the Spring 2022 semester has brought some big changes to Central Michigan University. The sun is shining brighter, but the light is coming from the faces of students, faculty and staff that were covered by masks.

President Bob Davies announced the university had decided to relax its mask policies due to declining COVID-19 case numbers earlier in March. Now, masks are only required in indoor instructional spaces like classrooms and laboratories.

The new policy follows what many other public universities are doing. COVID-19 hospitalizations are decreasing, and daily case counts are the lowest they've been since last summer signaling a return to normalcy we haven't seen before.

It feels incredible.

Campus life is getting some return to normalcy that only upperclassmen would remember. A sunny St. Patrick's Day saw many students gathering for off-campus parties. Earlier this week, three-man comedy band Lewberger performed to dozens of students in the Plachta Auditorium. Program Board also teased the first official spring concert since 2019 scheduled for April 29.

Looking forward, more student organizations are planning events that wouldn't have been possible during the height of the pandemic. Central Bridge, for example, is planning the first-ever "First-Generation Students Week" from April 11-15. The events will help both prospective and current first-generation college students become acquainted with campus.

With other events like the New Venture Challenge on April 22 or the 7th Annual Campus Diversity Symposium on April 27, it's looking like the last six weeks of class will have plenty of things to do and learn.

After a year of what feels like constant issues; from campus dining complaints to a confusing website launch to a nationally publicized scholarship mishap – it feels amazing to finally have a victory over the pandemic.

While we celebrate, it's important to remember that this pandemic is still not completely over.

More than 30 percent of people in Michigan are still not vaccinated and it's likely that number won't increase any time soon. Meanwhile, more than 1,000 cases continue to be reported each day.

Many students and faculty will continue to wear masks for their own safety, it's important to respect that decision. We must do everything we can to keep the CMU community safe.

In his email to campus, Davies said vaccinations, testing and other protocols will continue until the end of the semester. Take the opportunity to get tested if you show symptoms and vaccinated if you haven't been already.

It feels like we're closer than ever to putting the pandemic away for good.

Let's make Fall 2022 the return to normalcy we've all been waiting for.

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Central Michigan Life, the independent voice of Central Michigan University, is edited and published by students of Central Michigan University every Thursday during the fall and spring semesters. The newspaper's online edition, cm-life.com, contains all of the material published in print, and is updated on an as-needed basis.

Central Michigan Life serves the CMU and Mount Pleasant communities, and is under the jurisdiction of the independent Student Media Board of Directors. Dave Clark serves as Director of Student Media at CMU and is the adviser to the newspaper. Articles and opinions do not necessarily reflect the position or opinions of Central Michigan University. *Central Michigan Life* is a member of the Associated Press, the Michigan Press Association, the Michigan Collegiate Press Association, the Associated Collegiate Press, College Newspaper Business & Advertising Managers Association, the Mount Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Michigan Home Builders Association, Mount Pleasant Housing Association and the Mount Pleasant Downtown Business Association. The newspaper's online provider is SN Works.

Central Michigan Life is distributed throughout the campus and at numerous locations throughout Mount Pleasant. Non-university subscriptions are $75 per academic year. Back copies are available at 50 cents per copy, or $1 if mailed. Photocopies of stories are 25 cents each. Digital copies of photographs published in *Central Michigan Life* are available upon request at specified costs.

Central Michigan Life's editorial and business offices are located at 436 Moore Hall, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI 48859, telephone (989) 774-3493 or 774-LIFE.

OPINION |

What we learned from CM Life's assessment survey

Michael Livingston
Editor-in-chief

Our newsroom was stunned at the end of the Feb. 17 Board of Trustees meeting as Chair Richard Studley awarded President Bob Davies with a $35,000 annual raise and a one-time $75,000 bonus.

The Presidential Assessment Committee's findings did not add up to what we were seeing and hearing around campus over the past several months.

After multiple campus controversies from the past year, we expected the findings to be a bit more... mixed.

Last year, the committee was tasked with compiling a comprehensive review of the president's leadership. Studley and trustees Oliver and Wardrop, put out a 25-question survey to a group of 387 "university stakeholders."

Out of the 193 who responded, the results were overwhelmingly approving of Davies and his leadership. So, who does the committee define as "stakeholders?"

Studley writes in the committee's report that the individuals were not hand-selected by the board nor the assessment committee; but choosen based on their participation in certain campus groups and organizations.

The committee sent the survey to students, faculty, staff, alumni, local and state leaders, and community members as well as 50 randomly selected students, faculty, staff and alumni and to 13 individuals who served on Davies' search comittee.

CM Life journalists are trained to use skepticism to answer tough questions. A survey that's mainly sent to a select group of people didn't sound very comprehensive.

We wanted to see what would happen if we released the survey ourselves. On Feb. 23, that's what we did.

We used the Board of Trustees' questions and opened it up to anyone with a university email account. That includes students, staff, faculty, and recent alumni.

The survey could only be taken once per person. Names and emails were kept confidential. We posted the survey on our social media pages multiple times a week.

In the first 24 hours after launch, CM Life's survey surpassed the number of respondants the committee got. Over the next three weeks, we gathered 509 total responses.

We combed through the data but it wasn't hard to see a big picture emerge.

Responses showed disapproval for Davies' leadership on nearly all levels, reflecting the opposite of the Presidential Assessment Committee's findings.

How did two identical surveys, receive such different reactions? What does this say about the health and morale of this community? What other "stakeholders" are being left out of the conversation?

It's important to mention our survey was not scientific. We didn't pursue a certain sample size or evaluate our distribution methods. We also acknowledge that the average CM Life reader may be more critical of CMU administrators.

Despite this, our survey uncovered an indisputable truth — hundreds of people at this university feel frustrated by its leadership. I believe, those people deserve to be acknowledged.

If the Board of Trustees wanted an accurate assessment of Davies' leadership and community morale, they should have just asked us for it. In its effort to gather a "wide range" of opinions the board overlooked an entire group of people who are not satisfied with the university's leadership.

CM Life sent our data to the president's office and the Board of Trustees. What they choose to do with our findings, is up to them.

I encourage you, to continue to use your voice to help uplift this community. Write a letter to the editor or a guest column and send it to editor@cm-life.com.

Your opinions are valuable. We care about what you have to say.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Send to editor@cm-life.com

Dear administration, do student voices really matter to you?

TO THE EDITOR,

"Your voice matters."

"We want to hear from you."

These are the words President Davies stressed in an email to the community regarding opportunities for us to participate in open forums and town halls related to decisions that will impact the community.

However, how can our voices be heard when Central Michigan University officials schedule town hall meetings and open forums at a time when many classes are in session? How can student employees and full-time staff have their voices heard when many are at work when town hall meetings and open forums meet? How can our voices be heard when the community is given only a two-day notice about an upcoming town hall and a three-day notice for an upcoming open forum?

In a qualitative interview with a faculty member, they stated, "I am proud of my students and support their mission, but I wish I could support them more. Many of us do, but we cannot since we don't have much security."

A digital rendering of the Washington Commons residential community

How can faculty give honest opinions when doing so can jeopardize the security of their job?

These actions are why community members have deduced that the town hall meetings and open forums are set at a time to hinder the community's voice due to certain actions or inactions by President Davies and other CMU officials. What other reason could they have for scheduling a town hall meeting from 3:30-4:30 p.m. or an open forum to meet from 2-2:50 p.m. when class is in session. Some students and staff also work during those times.

Is it to hinder the community's voice?

Moreover, President Davies stated in the email, "We clearly heard and understand the concerns raised about the proposed Washington Commons residential project...."

Yet, despite that our voices were "clearly heard," at the last Board of Trustees meeting, when student leader Aubre Thomas spoke she observed some trustee members who were on their phones, staring off into space or checking their smartwatches while she spoke.

How does this behavior demonstrate President Davies' claim that CMU officials want to hear from us and our voices matter?

If President Davies and other CMU officials actually want us to feel that our voices matter and are being heard, it is time to stop scheduling Board of Trustees meetings in the middle of a day when classes are in session and students and staff members are working.

It is time to end town hall meetings and open forums scheduled during the middle of a weekday.

It is time to end the practice of giving the community little notice for opportunities to participate in important decisions that will impact them.

We request that President Davies and CMU officials host additional town hall meetings for the Washington Commons residential project, other town halls, open forums and Board of Trustee meetings at a time that gives most of the community the ability to participate.

An appropriate time, we suggest, would be after 8:00 p.m. on weekdays or anytime on weekends.

RAFAEL GARZA, LAUREN HULL, ADDISON HOEKSTRA, NOLAN KAMOO, CASSIDY MASLOWSKY, ARIA SEGURA, AUBRE THOMAS, AND STEPHANIE VENN

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Prepare for power outages today with a GENERAC home standby generator $0 Money Down + Low Monthly Payment Options. Request a FREE Quote Call now before the next power outage: 1-855-922-0420

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Ride for FREE!

NO FARE IS COLLECTED AT △ & ⌂ BUS STOPS

MAROON

Southpoint/Winchester	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Village at Bluegrass	:21	:51	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
University Meadows	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Union Square	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Target			UPON REQUEST
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**
Washington/Ojibway	:44	:14	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Anspach/Pearce	:45	:15	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Ronan/Grawn	:47	:17	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Main St./Gaylord	:48	:18	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
MMC/DOAN CENTER	:55	:25	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Washington/Clayton	:05	:35	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Larzalere	:06	:36	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Wightman	:07	:37	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Park Library	:08	:38	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:12**	**:42**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

GOLD

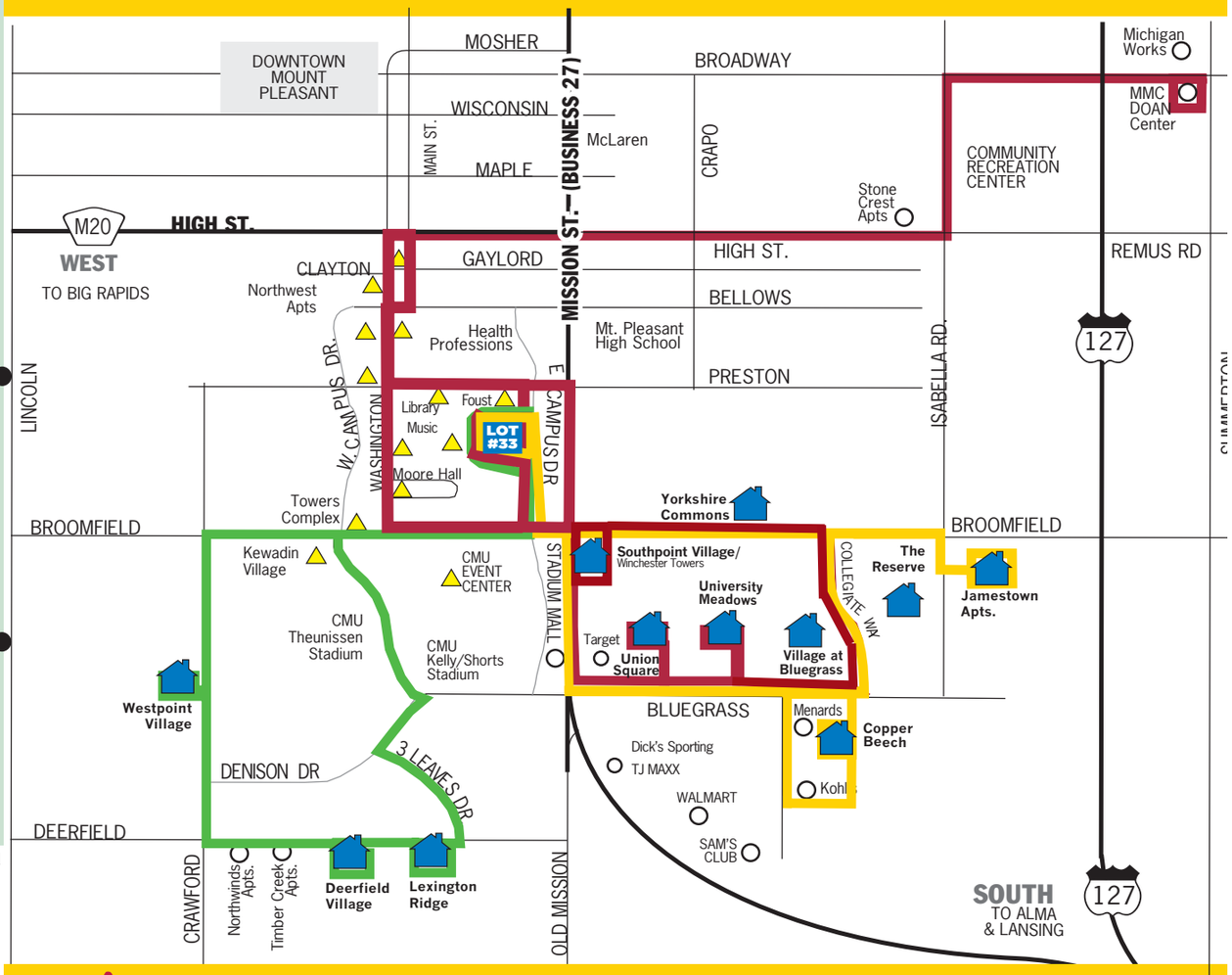
SAC/McGuirk	:13	:43	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Stadium Mall			UPON REQUEST
TJ Maxx			UPON REQUEST
Walmart			UPON REQUEST
Copper Beech	:26	:56	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Reserve	:28	:58	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Jamestown	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Yorkshire Commons	:33	:03	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

DEERFIELD

TOWERS @7/11	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Westpoint Village	:18	:48	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Deerfield Village	:20	:50	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Lexington Ridge	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Theunissen Stadium Lot#70	:27	:57	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Kewadin Village	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
SAC/McGuirk	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2021

COMMUTER SHUTTLE ROUTES



COMMUTER SHUTTLE:
MONDAY - FRIDAY 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM

8:00PM & 10:30PM RETURN FROM PARK LIBRARY TO APT. COMPLEXES ONLY

REQUEST STOPS: ○ REGULAR FARE $2.00

EVERY HALF HOUR SHUTTLE STOPS:

△ **BUS STOPS**
No fare collected/prepaid stops by contract with our partners

⌂ **APARTMENT COMPLEX STOPS**
Rides for residents prepaid by complex

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